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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**OWINGS MILLS PAIN MANAGEMENT DOCTOR PLEADS GUILTY TO  
CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE DEMEROL AND HEALTH CARE FRAUD**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today Richard S. Schlesinger, M.D., age 57, of Owings Mills, Maryland pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute demerol and health care fraud.

In a Statement of Facts provided to the Court as part of the plea agreement, Schlesinger operated a medical practice specializing in pain management at 9505 Reisterstown Road, Owings Mills, Maryland from November 1999 to December 31, 2002. During that time, the defendant admitted that he engaged in a conspiracy to distribute demerol, and in a scheme to defraud insurance companies by causing submission of fraudulent prescriptions for demerol to pharmacies and causing the pharmacies to submit false insurance claims to health care insurance companies seeking payment for drugs distributed. Claims submitted to Blue Cross Blue Shield, Aetna and others were fraudulent because Schlesinger wrote prescriptions for Demerol to purported patients who had not been examined by Schlesinger knowing that the purported patient or the pharmacy would return the Demerol to the defendant for his own use and others.

Schlesinger faces a maximum sentence of 20 years imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine and 3 years supervised release for conspiracy to distribute demerol. He faces a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, \$250,000 fine and 3 years supervised release for health care fraud. A sentencing date will be set by the Honorable Catherine C. Blake, United States District Judge.

The case is a result of a 3 year investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General, and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Maryland Board of Physicians. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Virginia B. Evans and Jane M. Erisman.